

PREAMBLE

At its best, athletic competition can hold intrinsic value for our society. It is a symbol of a great ideal: pursuing victory with honor.

The love of sports is deeply embedded in our national consciousness. The values of millions of participants and spectators are directly and dramatically influenced by the values conveyed by organized sports. Thus, sports are a major social force that shapes the quality and character of the American culture.

In the belief that the impact of sports can and should enhance the character and uplift the ethics of the nation, we seek to establish a framework of principles and a common language of values that can be adopted and practiced widely.

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED:

- 1.** The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”
- 2.** It is the duty of sports leadership — including coaches, athletic administrators, program directors and game officials — to promote sportsmanship and foster good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling these ethical principles.
- 3.** To promote sportsmanship and foster the development of good character, sports programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the mental, social and moral development of athletes and teaches them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.
- 4.** Participation in athletic programs is a privilege, not a right. To earn that privilege, athletes must conduct themselves, on and off the field, as positive role models who exemplify good character.
- 5.** Sports programs should establish standards for participation by adopting codes of conduct for coaches, athletes, parents, spectators and other groups that impact the quality of athletic programs.
- 6.** All sports participants must consistently demonstrate and demand scrupulous integrity and observe and enforce the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
- 7.** The importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship should be emphasized in all communications relating to the recruitment of athletes, including promotional and descriptive materials.
- 8.** In recruiting, educational institutions must specifically determine that the athlete is seriously committed to getting an education and has or will develop the academic skills and character to succeed.
- 9.** The highest administrative officer of organizations that offer sports programs must maintain ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of those programs. Such officers must assure that education and character development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, emotional, physical and moral well-being of athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win.
- 10.** The faculties of educational institutions must be directly involved in and committed to the academic success of student-athletes and the character-building goals of the institution.
- 12.** The leadership of sports programs at all levels must ensure that coaches, whether paid or voluntary, are competent to coach. Minimal competence may be attained by training or experience. It includes basic knowledge of: 1) the character-building aspects of sports, including techniques and methods of teaching and reinforcing the core values comprising sportsmanship and good character; 2) first-aid principles and the physical capacities and limitations of the age group coached; and 3) coaching principles and the rules and strategies of the sport.
- 13.** Because of the powerful potential of sports as a vehicle for positive personal growth, a broad spectrum of sports experiences should be made available to all of our diverse communities.
- 14.** To safeguard the health of athletes and the integrity of the sport, athletic programs must discourage the use of alcohol and tobacco and demand compliance with all laws and regulations, including those relating to gambling and the use of drugs.
- 15.** Though economic relationships between sports programs and corporate entities are often mutually beneficial, institutions and organizations that offer athletic programs must safeguard the integrity of their programs. Commercial relationships should be continually monitored to ensure against inappropriate exploitation of the organization’s name or reputation and undue interference or influence of commercial interests. In addition, sports programs must be prudent, avoiding undue financial dependency on particular companies or sponsors.
- 16.** The profession of coaching is a profession of teaching. In addition to teaching the mental and physical dimensions of their sport, coaches, through words and example, must also strive to build the character of their athletes by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and good citizens.